

Together for Tomorrow Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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This document is available at

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/fbci/together-for-tomorrow-faqs.pdf>

What is Together for Tomorrow (TFT)?

For an overview of Together for Tomorrow (TFT), see the document at

<http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/fbci/together-for-tomorrow-summary.pdf>

What are the primary components of TFT?

The three primary components of TFT are partnership events, learning community, and a national challenge through TFT.challenge.gov.

- *Partnership events.* Senior leaders at the U.S. Department of Education, the White House, and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) will hold town hall meetings and roundtable discussions in several urban, suburban, rural, and tribal communities across the country. These events will spotlight existing partnership efforts and foster and strengthen partnerships to propel improvement of the lowest-performing schools in those communities.
- *Learning community.* The U.S. Department of Education is establishing an online community for TFT as part of the School Turnaround Learning Community at schoolturnaroundsupport.org. Staff at the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, U.S. Department of Education and CNCS will also serve as resources for communities on TFT-related efforts, and organize periodic webinars to support TFT initiatives.
- *The Together for Tomorrow School Improvement Challenge conducted through TFT.challenge.gov* is challenging schools, national service programs, higher education institutions, and community and faith-based organizations to work together to propel improvement of our lowest-performing schools. This Challenge is being run by the U.S. Department of Education and is for the 2012-2013 school year.

What are TFT Challenge participants asked to do?

By the end of June, applicants will submit a challenge plan (maximum 10 pages) detailing their plan for the 2012-2013 school years. Successful TFT initiatives will:

- *Focus on the neediest schools.* Focus on improving Priority Schools in your communities and their feeder schools. Priority Schools are the lowest-achieving schools in a State as identified by a State department of education.
- *Invest in the capacity to work together.* Strengthen the capacity to manage partnerships among Priority Schools, national service programs, higher education institutions, community-based organizations (both secular and faith-based), students, families, teachers, state and local governments, business, philanthropy, and others.
- *Align efforts to key student outcomes.* Focus community partnerships on boosting key measurable student outcomes –Attendance, Behavior, Course performance, and College access (the ABCs) as a means to improve the neediest schools.
- *Celebrate and share success.* Inspire community and family engagement in education and strengthen a community culture of education success.

Details on the challenge are at <http://TFT.challenge.gov> and the challenge plan template is at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/fbc/together-for-tomorrow-template.doc>

What are the relevant dates for the TFT Challenge?

- Challenge opens at TFT.challenge.gov on April 18, 2012
- Submissions due by June 29, 2012
- Prizes will be announced on October 15, 2012. ~~by September 15, 2012~~

What are the recognition categories for the TFT Challenge?

Applicants must designate one entry category for their submission. The choices are: Emerging; Showcase – Local; and Showcase Multisite.

- The Emerging category is for new initiatives, or existing initiatives that are proposing significant advancements to meet the goals of the Challenge for the 2012-2013 school year. Plans submitted under this category must begin activities no later than September 2012.
- The Showcase-Local category is for existing initiatives working on a community or regional level that are already meeting the goals of the Challenge.
- The Showcase-Multisite is for existing national, state, or regional efforts with multiple operating sites that are already meeting the goals of the Challenge. Local initiatives that are a component of multisite efforts should apply together as one challenge entry.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to increase the number of applicants that are included in each award category and make additions to the awards provisions.

What are the prizes for the TFT challenge?

[note: prizes have been amended because of the number of submissions received]

Together for Tomorrow School Improvement Challenge Winners (all submissions meeting baseline standards)

- An invitation for up to two representatives from the organization to attend a Together for Tomorrow related event in Washington, D.C. with the White House, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Corporation for National and Community Service.
- Inclusion in the Together for Tomorrow online learning network.
- National recognition as a school-community partnership working to raise student achievement in our lowest-performing schools.
- There is no monetary value to this award

~~Honor Roll (10 Emerging, 10 Showcase Local, 10 Showcase Multisite)~~

- ~~• An invitation for up to two representatives from the organization to attend a Together for Tomorrow related event in Washington, D.C. with the White House, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Corporation for National and Community Service.~~
- ~~• Inclusion in the Together for Tomorrow online learning network.~~
- ~~• National recognition as some of America's best existing and emerging school community partnerships working to raise student achievement in our lowest-performing schools.~~
- ~~• There is no monetary value to this award.~~

~~Network Member (all entries meeting baseline standards)~~

- ~~• Inclusion in the Together for Tomorrow online learning network.~~
- ~~• Recognition as a school-community partnership working to raise student achievement in our lowest-performing schools.~~
- ~~• There is no monetary value to this award.~~

Who is eligible to apply for the TFT challenge?

Eligible applicants for the Together for Tomorrow Challenge must be nonprofit organizations, schools, school districts, or institutions of higher education. Other entities, including businesses and units of governments, are encouraged to partner with eligible applicants on Challenge submissions. Each school may only be included in one application. We hope and anticipate that multiple submissions will emerge from the same communities, but encourage local partnerships to work together to achieve greater scale and outcomes. To foster such broad partnerships, we encourage applications that involve multiple schools. Individuals are not eligible to apply.

Faith-based organizations are invited and eligible to participate in the Together for Tomorrow challenge in the same manner as other eligible organizations provided that any activities conducted by such organizations as part of the Together for Tomorrow challenge are consistent with the principles set forth in the Department's Regulations on the Participation of Faith-Based and Community Organizations in Department Programs. (See 34 CFR 75.52 available at <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/fund/reg/fbci-reg.html>.)

Is there funding available for TFT?

Together for Tomorrow is not a new federal grant program, but an approach to better coordinate existing resources and efforts. There are a number of existing programs that, consistent with their authorized purposes and allowable activities, may be able to be used to support TFT activities.

From the U.S. Department of Education, these programs include School Improvement Grants, Title I, Race To The Top, Promise Neighborhoods, and 21st Century Community Learning Centers. The opportunity for states to request flexibility from certain provisions of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act also may open up additional opportunities for states and school districts to use resources to strengthen partnerships. For example, some states are being given flexibility with funding that has been previously committed to fund Supplemental Education Services. For more on these funding sources see www.ed.gov.

The Corporation for National and Community Service also has a number of funding opportunities that could be used to support these efforts including AmeriCorps State and National, AmeriCorps VISTA, Senior Corps, and the Social Innovation Fund. For more on these funding sources see www.cnscs.gov

The Together for Tomorrow challenge focuses on improving our nation's lowest-performing schools, with a specific focus on Priority Schools and their feeder schools. What are Priority Schools?

A Priority School is a school that, based on the most recent data available, has been identified as among the lowest-performing schools in the State by the State Education Agency (SEA). The total number of priority schools in a State must be at least five percent of the Title I schools in the State. A Priority School is—

- a school among the lowest five percent of Title I schools in the State based on the achievement of the “all students” group in terms of proficiency on the statewide assessments that are part of the SEA’s differentiated recognition, accountability, and support system, combined, and has demonstrated a lack of progress on those assessments over a number of years in the “all students” group;
- a Title I-participating or Title I-eligible high school with a graduation rate less than 60 percent over a number of years; or
- a Tier I or Tier II school under the School Improvement Grant (SIG) program that is using SIG funds to implement a school intervention model.

May communities that do not have any Priority Schools participate in the Together for Tomorrow School Improvement Challenge?

Yes, provided that they have verified with their State department of education that there are no Priority Schools in their community and they focus their Challenge plans on the lowest five percent of schools in their community as measured by student achievement on statewide assessments. These submissions will only be considered for the Network Member recognition category in the challenge.

We hope and expect the TFT Challenge template will be a useful planning tool for schools and community partners even outside the parameters of the TFT Challenge.

Is Together for Tomorrow for new or existing partnership initiatives?

Both. Together for Tomorrow will advance partnerships across a broad continuum: catalyzing new efforts, strengthening existing collaborations, and identifying high-quality initiatives and evidence-based practices to share with others.

For organizations that are on the sidelines and schools looking to generate new productive partnerships, TFT will help provide a road map. For current partnership efforts, TFT will help focus efforts and strengthen quality. For exemplary initiatives already at work, TFT will spotlight their efforts, and share their efforts and promising practices with others across the nation.

What will be the benefits of participating in the TFT challenge?

In addition to the prizes detailed on TFT.challenge.gov, Together for Tomorrow may help school districts and communities expand and deepen their collaborative efforts to help turn around their lowest-performing schools. Through this effort, we are committed to changing the relationship between schools and community partners, both faith-based and secular, and helping these partners and stakeholders move from education outsiders to education insiders. The initiative will also promote a community culture where education improvement is viewed as everyone's responsibility.

What is the timeframe for the TFT challenge?

The TFT Challenge applications may be submitted through TFT.challenge.gov through June 29, 2012. Winners will be announced on October 15 ~~September 14~~. Plans will be for the 2012-2013 school year.

Who will judge the TFT challenge?

The Together for Tomorrow School Improvement Challenge will be judged by a panel of staff at the U.S. Department of Education, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and the White House.

What are the judging criteria for the TFT challenge?

- Eligibility review. All applications will be reviewed to determine whether they meet the eligibility requirements.
- Partner schools (up to 20 points). Focuses on the lowest-performing schools, and includes Priority Schools and their feeder schools.

- Strengthening capacity (up to 20 points). Strengthens capacity to coordinate school-community partnerships, including dedicating staff and volunteers as partnership coordinators serving in low-performing schools.
- School and student needs (up to 20 points). Articulates school and student needs at partner schools in all four of the following student outcome areas - attendance, behavior, course performance, college access; and uses student data to prioritize needs in each of these focus areas.
- Service activities and community resources (up to 20 points). Describes service activities and community resources that will be engaged to meet the needs of partner schools, and how service activities are informed by evidence-based effective practices.
- Measuring and sustaining impact (up to 10 points). Articulates plans to measure the effectiveness of the initiative and sustain the effort.
- Celebrating and inspiring engagement (up to 10 points). Articulates plans to celebrate and publicize TFT efforts and recognize the work of the TFT partners.

How do we get involved in TFT?

~~To participate in the TFT Challenge, visit TFT.challenge.gov for details and submission requirements.~~

~~If you are interested in hosting a TFT town hall or roundtable discussion in your community, please contact Michael Robbins at michael.robbins@ed.gov or 202-260-8757.~~

The TFT Challenge is now closed. If you would like to be placed on the email list to receive future TFT-related communications, please email edpartners@ed.gov or call (202) 205-9655

Why does TFT focus on the ABCs – Attendance, Behavior, Course Performance, and College Access?

TFT focuses on the ABCs for three reasons: they are outcomes clearly linked to student success, they are easily measurable, and community service activities can positively impact them.

Attendance, Behavior, and Course Performance outcomes are adapted from the work of Robert Balfanz of Johns Hopkins University and Diplomas Now (diplomasnow.org), a collaborative program involving Communities in Schools, City Year and Talent Development, and a recipient of an Investing in Innovation (i3) grant from the U.S. Department of Education.

For college access, a sizable percentage of high school seniors do not complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) each year. Helping students and families complete the FAFSA is a concrete and impactful way that community partners can advance college access.

What are the Together for Tomorrow demonstration sites?

The White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, the U.S. Department of Education, and the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) have worked to establish and support demonstration sites for Together for Tomorrow in six cities: Orlando, Fla.;

New Orleans, La.; Memphis, Tenn.; Denver and Center, Colo.; and New Haven, Conn. Planning is also under way in Detroit, Mich. ~~and Albuquerque, N.M.~~

Demonstration sites are supported by CNCS with AmeriCorps VISTA members serving as full-time school-community partnership coordinators in target schools. A description of activities in each site is available at <http://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/list/fbci/together-for-tomorrow-sites.pdf>. The process to become a TFT demonstration site is closed, and the means to become a TFT initiative is now through the Challenge.

Does Together for Tomorrow include pre-kindergarten?

TFT focused on Priority Schools as designated by state education agencies and their feeder schools. Pre-K may be part of one of these elementary schools, or there may be discernible feeder patterns between pre-K programs in a community and Priority Schools.

What are the Terms and Conditions related to Submitted Materials for the TFT School Improvement Challenge?

The uploaded challenge plan document and all other submitted materials for this competition (collectively, “the Submitted Works”) cannot contain false, misleading, or inaccurate information or material that can be used for any unlawful purpose or that violates or infringes another’s rights, including but not limited to privacy, publicity or intellectual property rights, or that constitutes copyright or license infringement.

The Submitted Works cannot contain images or likenesses of, or references to, any individual without the explicit consent of that individual, or, if the individual is a minor, the explicit written consent of that minor's parent or legal guardian. Applicants must be prepared to produce proof of consent upon request.

The Submitted Works cannot contain brand names or trademarks of anyone other than the Applicant unless permission has been obtained from the trademark owner.

The Submitted Works cannot contain material that is inappropriate, indecent, obscene, defamatory, slanderous or libelous, or that promotes alcohol, tobacco, drugs, firearms, bigotry, racism, hatred or harm against any group or individual or promotes discrimination based on race, sex, religion, nationality, disability, sexual orientation or age.

By submitting an application for the Together for Tomorrow School Improvement Challenge, the applicant assures that the Submitted Works are the applicant’s work product and were prepared by the applicant(s) representative on behalf of and with express authorization of the applicant. The applicant also agrees to grant the U.S. Department of Education, the White House, and the Corporation for National and Community Service a transferable, irrevocable, perpetual, non-exclusive, fully paid-up royalty free license for the Submitted Works developed for, and provided to the U.S. Department of Education, as part of entering this challenge, with the right to sublicense, to use, modify, make derivatives thereof, make, have made, produce, reproduce, copy, display, publicly perform, and distribute the Submitted Works in the United States and throughout the world for the purposes of promoting TFT and its related initiatives and programs.

Applicants by submitting this application, also authorize the U.S. Department of Education, the White House, and the Corporation for National and Community Service to use their name, appearance, likeness, voice and/or biographical material in connection with the Submitted Works.

Any use, including downloading, of the U.S. Department of Education's Seal by any person or organization outside of the Department, including as part of the TFT challenge, is prohibited absent prior express written authorization from the Department. By submitting an application for the Together for Tomorrow School Improvement Challenge, an applicant assures that the application complies with all applicable Rules, Terms, and Conditions. Any application determined not to comply with such Rules, Terms, and Conditions will be disqualified.

Each applicant may only submit one application for consideration. Submitted applications may be altered and resubmitted up until the challenge submission deadline.

Participation in TFT is also governed by the terms of use on the [challenge.gov](http://challenge.gov/terms) website, available at challenge.gov/terms